

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 DHA-02 ACDA-07 IO-13 OMB-01
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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3176

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 0739

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US

SUBJ: LOCAL SOVIET REACTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS CONTROVERSY

1. AT US ARMED FORCES DAY RECEPTION DCM APPROACHED A GROUP CONTAINING USSR DCM BORIS I. JILIAEV, HIS WIFE, AND YUGOSLAV DCM. AFTER A VERY BRIEF EXCHANGE OF PLEASANTRIES, THE LATTER TWO FADED AWAY AS IF ON SIGNAL. JILIAEV THEN EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT NEWSPAPER REPORTS OF AIR SHIPMENTS OF US MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO THAILAND AND SAID THIS CAUSED "HIS VIETNAMESE FRIENDS" CONCERN. AFTER A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THAILAND AND THE PECULIAR SENSITIVITIES OF THE VIETNAMESE, THE SUBJECT WAS DROPPED. THE IMPRESSION GIVEN WAS THAT JILIAEV SAID WHAT HE HAD TO SAY ON THE SUBJECT BUT WAS NOT REALLY INTERESTED.

2. THERE THEN ENSUED A LONG AND VERY INTENSE CONVERSATION ON THE US ATTITUDE TOWARDS HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SOVIET UNION. THE DISCUSSION BEGAN WITH JILIAEV'S STATEMENT, "OF COURSE, RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES ARE SOMEWHAT STRAINED AT THIS TIME". QUIETLY AND COURTEOUSLY BUT WITH OBVIOUS PERSONAL FEELING, JILIAEV COMPLAINED BITTERLY ABOUT US BEHAVIOR TOWARDS SOVIET DISSIDENTS, CITING PARTICULARLY THE RECEPTION OF "CRIMINAL" BUKOVSKY IN THE WHITE HOUSE. RHEN REMINDED THAT
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THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES HAD SHOWN TENDER SOLICITUDE TOWARDS SUCH AMERICANS AS GUS HALL, JILIAEV RESPONDED THAT "IF MY BEHAVIOR IS NOT PROPER, YOU SHOULD NOT EMULATE IT".

3. JILIAEV REFERRED TO USA INSTITUTE DIRECTOR ARBATOV'S DISCUSSION OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AMERICAN AND SOVIET SOCIETIES AND THE FACT THAT THOSE SOCIETIES ARE NOT GETTING

CLOSER IN VALUES AND SHOULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO DO SO.
WHILE NOT EXPLICITLY STATED, HIS MESSAGE WAS CLEAR, IN ITS
CONTEXT, THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE
ITS VALUES ON ANOTHER SOCIETY AND THAT SOVIET SOCIETY HAD A
RIGHT TO DEFINE ITS OWN CUSTOMS AND PROPRIETIES.

4. TAKING UP THE ARBATOV LINE, DCM AGREED THAT OUR SOCIETIES
WERE DIFFERENT IN MANY WAYS BUT POINTED OUT OUR VIEW THAT
WHILE DIFFERENCES EXIST WE HAVE VERY IMPORTANT MUTUAL
INTERESTS SUCH AS DETENTE AND SALT, AND THAT THE UNITED STATES
DID NOT CONNECT ITS DEEPLY-HELD CONVICTIONS ABOUT INDIVIDUAL
HUMAN RIGHTS WITH THE NECESSITY TO MAKE PROGRESS IN THESE
SUPREMELY IMPORTANT AREAS. JILIAEV RESPONDED THAT THAT WAS
JUST THE POINT, "WE ARE AFRAID THAT THIS WILL JEOPARDIZE
DETENTE".

5. COMMENT: BY GENERAL AGREEMENT IN THE MISSION AND
AMONG OTHER WESTERN DIPLOMATS, JILIAEV IS ONE OF THE MOST
SOPHISTICATED, OPEN AND FRIENDLY SOVIET DIPLOMATS IN THEIR
EXPERIENCE. CERTAINLY HE IS A BRIGHT STAR IN THE SOVIET
FIRMAMENT IN RANGOON. ON OTHER OCCASIONS HE HAS CARRIED
OUT OBVIOUS INSTRUCTIONS TO RELATE SOVIET VIEWS WITH DIS-
PASSION, AND OCCASIONALLY SEEMING DISINTEREST. IN THIS
CASE, HOWEVER, HE HAD HIS HEART IN HIS JOB. HE DID NOT
MAKE HIS PITCH ON IDEOLOGICAL GROUNDS BUT THERE SEEMED TO
BE A STRONG ELEMENT OF INDIGNATION AND OUTRAGED NATIONAL
PRIDE.

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